

Farmers Nominate Best & Worst Buys

owners are so loyal to the brand.

"Finally, my **Troy-Bilt** 8 hp tiller has really earned its keep, tilling our large garden for 12 years. It's well worth the money."

Larry Johnston, Linden, Mich.: "My 1978 **Ford** 2600 tractor, which I bought used in 1991, is my best buy. I use it every week and have replaced only a starter motor. It has required only routine maintenance. This tractor always starts and operates without fail. I've used it for snow plowing, brush hogging, mowing, plowing and disking, rototilling, and landscape raking. It's very fuel efficient."

George McDaniels, Canandaigua, N.Y.: "I bought my 1995 **Ford** Ranger pickup used in 1966 and it still runs great. I've used it for a lot of hard jobs and it has performed way beyond my expectations."

Stewart G. Ellis, Clearbrook, Va.: "I've had my **Farmall** Super C tractor for more than 25 years and have used it for everything. My son drove it and my grandchildren, too. Now my great grandsons are starting to use it. It's my best buy."

"Before my 1998 **Dodge** Intrepid had even 30,000 miles on it, the check engine light started to come on. The problem was caused by a bad gas cap and the repair cost me \$900. I traded it in for a 2004 **Dodge** Intrepid, but after that car had about 38,000 miles on it the same problem happened again."

Cliff Erwin, Springfield, Ill.: "My 2004 **Troy-Bilt** Big Red garden tractor equipped with a 24 hp, 2-cyl. Briggs & Stratton Intek engine and automatic transmission and 54-in. deck is my best buy. This machine has performed well in maintaining our five acres of grass and trees. It runs smooth and is quite maneuverable for a conventional yard tractor. After almost 200 hours of service, it still has the original belts and blades."

"My 2004 **Poulan** Woodsman 2150 LE chain saw equipped with a 16-in. bar is my worst buy. This chain saw is difficult to start, and it's even difficult to restart after it has run for a while. This is my second model. The first one wouldn't start at all so the dealer replaced it. However, when this saw finally starts it cuts well and has plenty of power."

Marvin Wooster, Denham Springs, La.: "My **Deere** 1090 tractor is fun to use and is the best tractor I've ever operated. It's fuel efficient and starts right up every time."

"My **Ryobi** 31 cc weedeater is my worst buy. I spend more time trying to keep the string on the spool than I do controlling weeds."

Gary Ewen, Dougherty, Iowa: A 1999 **Allied** 595 front-end loader rates as Gary's "best buy". "I bought this loader new after looking at almost every brand on the market. With help from a neighbor, I mounted it on my **International** Harvester 966 tractor in just one short afternoon."

"All the mounting brackets fit perfectly - no cutting, drilling or grinding was required. I was able to buy the loader painted red to match the color of my tractor. I ordered it with an 8-ft. bucket since my main use for it is pushing snow."

"The bucket comes equipped with quick-tach mounting brackets, which I really like. I just drive into the bucket, raise it, and install two pins. It's as easy as hooking up to a wagon."

Jerry Richardson, Indianapolis, Ind.: "My 2003 **Farm Pro** tractor runs good and is fuel efficient. However, the fan blade has already been replaced twice. The new blade had cracks in it when I bought it. But whenever I call for help all I get is an answering machine. I ordered the fan blade last summer but still don't have one that I can use."

Ron Anderson, Clarion, Iowa: "Last year we bought a **Kinze** 16-row Edge Vac bulk fill planter. It's our worst buy. This planter

messed up the population and spacing on all our corn acres. The worst 160 acres had to be replanted, and all the rest had real poor seed spacing ranging from 2 in. to 6 ft. This happened even though the monitor indicated everything was okay. We replaced the monitor, seed unit, a bristle auger (the bristles fell off), and cracked bucket chains but that didn't help. Another problem is that the bulk fill tank is complicated and hard to clean out."

"Buying from a local Iowa company, we expected fair treatment but we don't feel that we received it."

"We replaced this planter with a **Deere** 1770 no-till planter before planting beans last year, and we're pleased enough to call it our best buy."

Ronnie Bryant, Cornelius, N.C.: A used 1990 **Mitsubishi** Micro mini 4-WD truck equipped with a 4-speed transmission with a



high and low gearbox rates as Ronnie's "best buy". "This truck had about 17,000 miles on it when I bought it. It'll go anywhere a Mule or Gator will go and always keeps me warm and dry. These trucks can haul bigger, heavier loads, and you can buy two of them for the price of one Mule or Gator. Also, they're really fuel efficient. I bought it from Nat Smith at 4x4 Mini Utility (ph 706-838-5313; minitility@yahoo.com)."

Donald E. Schultz, Hortonville, Wis.: Donald nominates his **Poulan** 18-in. Wild Thing chainsaw as his "worst buy". "We were able to use this chainsaw only for three or four days before the oiler quit working, so we took it back to the store where we bought it and they gave us a new one. We used that model for about two days but then it developed the same problem. They gave us another new saw, but it worked for only about a half hour. This time the store said we'd have to take the saw to a dealer."

"The dealer said they'd have to work on it and that it could be a while before they could do the work. We waited about four weeks and then called the dealer. They told us they had returned the saw to the company, and that they'd send us a new model because the cost to fix ours would be more than what it's worth."

"It took another three weeks before we got the new saw. We used it once. The second time it wouldn't start. We'll definitely never buy a Poulan chainsaw again."

Renell Weeks, Swan Valley, Idaho: "Our 1968 **Deere** 4020 tractor, which we bought used, is a best buy. We've had a front-end loader on it since 1974. We've used it to handle 1-ton bales all this time. The engine was overhauled at 8,900 hours."

"Our **Case** 1290 tractor, which we bought in 1986, has more than 10,000 hours on it yet the engine has never been overhauled. It's a best buy. Our only problem was that the right final drive went out about 12 years ago."

"Our **Case** 8850 swather has about 2,800 hours on it. We use it to cut about 250 acres of hay per year with hardly any major breakdowns. We've custom cut a lot of acres with it."

James Brown, Wilton, Iowa: James is disappointed with the quality of his **LaCrosse** two-buckle overshoes. "This company used to make the 'Cadillac' of rubber footwear. I always got three years or more wear out of a

"Best Buy" Egress Window

When the Abe Wronski family of Port Huron, Mich., built a new farm home, they did a lot of hard thinking about the design of the basement. That's because one of the family members suffers from claustrophobia.

To solve the problem, Wronski installed three new Habitech egress windows. The big window wells provide a lot of natural light, and are large enough for even the biggest person to get out if necessary. A hinged safety grill installs over the top.

The Wronski's say the only drawback is that the window wells do occasionally fill with leaves and have to be cleaned out.

Downspout openings need to be at least 6 in. from the sides of the window well and directed toward a well-drained area. Improper drainage could cause a window well to cave in during heavy rains.

The window well attaches to the wall with five concrete fasteners on each flange. Its soft, oyster shell tone reflects a maximum amount of non-glare light into the basement. An optional window well ladder is available.

The Habitech basement egress system is warranted for 10 years for replacement due to materials or workmanship.

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Habitech egress window wells come with a hinged safety grill (above) that installs over the top. Window well attaches to wall with five concrete fasteners on each flange.



pair two-buckle overshoes. However, the last pair I bought didn't last even one year. They were made in China yet cost the same as the company's previous models. These overshoes

"They were made in China yet cost the same as previous models."

ripped out in the 'gullet' and kept ripping out down toward the toe. Now I'm trying out a different brand."

Terry Hall, Berlin, Ct.: "My 2005 **Reese** drum mower is a low maintenance, high quality mower. It has very few moving parts and performs well in the harshest conditions, including rain-soaked and blown-down crops. It does the work of two haybines due to the lack of downtime for repairs and the efficient manner in which it performs. Drying time is the same in all conditions."

Dave DeVito, Mora, Minn.: Dave likes his **Stihl** 440 Magnum chainsaw. "I had a 20-year-old **Stihl** 044 chainsaw that burned up in a fire. I used the insurance money to buy a new version of the same model. It runs and cuts as good as the old one, and all the extra bars and chains I have from the old saw fit the new one as well. We have a top notch dealer close by who will take care of things. That kind of support doesn't happen often enough these days."

On the "worst buy" side, he lists **Firestone** Trans Force AT tires. "I put a set of these tires on my work truck in February 2006 and they're just this side of bald after only 11 months and about 30,000 miles. My tire dealer said my truck is overloaded and that I drive too fast. But these tires are rated at just over 6,000 lbs., and I carry 5,000 lbs. on the

rear end. I drive at 62 mph which I don't think is that fast."

Dale H. Hollabaugh, Garfield, Ky.: Dale is impressed with his 2005 **Toyota** Tundra front wheel drive pickup equipped with a V-8 engine. "It'll pull a 16-ft. gooseneck stock trailer with ease, as well as a 6,000-lb. load of round bales. Many people told me this pickup was too small, but I couldn't be happier with it."

He isn't as pleased with a pair of **Poulan** chainsaws. "They're the hardest starting saws I've ever owned. They flood easily. Three loose bolts fell out of one of the saws the first time I used it."

Grant England, Gales Creek, Oregon: Grant likes his 2006 **Kubota** L3400 tractor equipped with a front-end loader, 4-ft. bucket, and backhoe. "After months of testing many different tractor brands, including Deere, Case IH, Massey Ferguson and others, I found Kubota to be head and shoulders ahead of all the others. It's built stronger, has more power, and is less expensive. I used my Kubota to haul timber down off a mountain. Some logs measure 30 in. in diameter by 60 ft. long, but the tractor's 3-speed hydrostatic system didn't even grunt. The tractor did everything I asked it to do, and then some."

"I thought I had a problem with the loader controls but the service tech figured it out. I had used the backhoe and when I put it in stow position I accidentally set one of the levers in the detent mode, which affected the loader controls. I learned to be sure of the lever position thereafter."

Susan Beasley, Pottsboro, Texas: Susan is impressed with **Green Light** fire ant control with Conserve (A.G. Organics, Prosper, Texas ph 877 447-3330; info@agorganics.com; www.greenlightco.com). It's an organic granular product for use in home gardens and

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